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13 DEC 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Deputy Director for Administration

FROM: Director of Personnel

SUBJECT: Consideration of Proposed Program to Indicate
Support of Iranian Hostages

1. Action Requested: This memorandum provides options to be considered regarding a proposal that the Agency conduct a program for its employees which offers the opportunity for them to indicate their support of the Iranian hostages. A recommended course of action is included in paragraph 4.

2. Background: Americans are trying in a variety of ways to indicate their support of the Iranian hostages. Arm bands are being worn, church bells rung, flags are being flown and letters are being sent to Iranian officials. It has been suggested that a program be conducted during the week before Christmas to indicate the support and concern of Agency employees as a group. Newspaper articles indicated that the President considered designating December 24th as a National Day of Prayer for the hostages. The Executive Order announcing the closing of Federal offices on that date did not, however, mention such a day of prayer.

3. Staff Position: The following are options which could be considered with regard to a program.

a. Ecumenical church service in the Auditorium. This would give employees of many different faiths the opportunity to offer their combined prayers for the safety and early release of the hostages. There may, however, be some difficulty in identifying suitable clergy who could conduct such a program during this busy holiday season. It would also increase the risk of public attention being directed to the program in a way which might cause harm to the hostages.

b. Designate an area where individual prayers could be offered. However, we understand that the Office of General Counsel at one time ruled that the Agency should not set aside an area for religious purposes.

c. Director speaks in the Auditorium. This would indicate the concern of Agency management and offer employees the opportunity to gather together as a sign of solidarity during a difficult period. The Director could offer a prayer for the hostages or ask for a moment of silent prayer. There would be less chance of public disclosure.

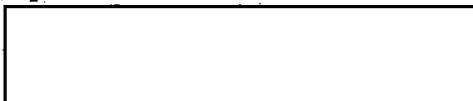
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d. Directors Notes. Comment through this publication would indicate the interest and concern of Agency management. This would reach more employees than an Auditorium program. There would be considerable chance of public disclosure.

e. Determine that a program is not appropriate. The State Department has thus far represented the Federal Government in all formal activities with regard to the hostages. We are not aware of any action on the part of the President, the Office of Personnel Management, the Department of Defense, or any other Federal agency to conduct such a program for its employees. Some employees may consider the absence of such a program as an indication of a lack of concern. Others may prefer to act as individuals or through their churches.

4. Recommendation: It is recommended that if an Agency program is considered appropriate, the Director speak in the Auditorium.



for Harry E. Fitzwater

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